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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of the Youth Employment and Training Programs (YETP), designed to provide disadvantaged out-of-school youth with a broad range of employment and training services in order to enhance their job prospects and career opportunities, was conducted to develop a base of information on which programs were successful in meeting YETP goals. In the Akron, Ohio area, a four-week values clarification class was compared to a more traditional vocational counseling program. A classroom-type women's non-traditional occupation program was designed to assist young women explore the "non-traditional" world of work for women. Eligible youth who expressed an interest in career planning assistance were randomly assigned to either the values clarification or the traditional counseling program. Women expressing an interest in the non-traditional program were accommodated outside of the random assignment process. A quasi-control group was comprised of eligible youth not interested in career planning assistance who were appropriately assigned to training, job placement, or OJT. Response variables collected before and after the experiment included a measure of locus of control orientation and a measure of the amount of accuracy of information possessed by the youth regarding career choices. Demographic data and reading and math achievement scores were collected at intake. In order to assess acquisition and retention of employment, periodic followups were planned, including satisfaction with the services provided. (Author)

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Implementing Random Assignment:

An Evaluation Design for a Youth Employment and Training Project

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In 1977 the Department of Labor instituted the Youth Employment and Training Programs (YETP) which were "structured to make available to youth a broad range of employment and training services designed locally and adapted to local needs". The purpose of these programs was to provide disadvantaged out-of-school youth with employment and training services in order to enable them to secure unsubsidized employment in the public and private sectors of the economy.

One of the stipulations of the legislation called for the provision of knowledge development. The evaluation design that was formulated was coordinated with the Akron/Summit/Medina Employment and Training Consortium which was the local prime sponsor.

The thrust of the evaluation effort was to test various program models dealing with youth unemployment and to develop a base of information on which programs were successful in meeting YETP goals. A number of programs have been implemented in the Akron, Ohio area to serve the purpose of supplying career development, employment and training services for the youth.

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A four week classroom-type Career Development program was offered which combined values clarification, goal-setting and decision-making exercises with the exploration of the community's career and educational resources. The enrollees were also trained in job seeking skills and assisted by the instructors in implementing their career goals. A more traditional, short term vocational counseling program, involving individualized interest testing, career counseling and career exploration was also offered. Another Akron agency offered a women's Non-Traditional Occupation Program which was a classroom program desinged to assist young women explore--through testing, counseling, and pre-vocational "hands-on" learning experiences--the "non-traditional" world of work for women. In addition, the usual skills training, job placement, and OJT (on-the-job-training) services provided to CETA qualifiers were available for youth after completion of the career exploration phase of services.

In the Akron area, eligibility criteria for the career development programs (Title III services) included youth 17½ to 21 years old who were local residents, out of school, and members of families whose income did not exceed 85% of the lower living standard income level (i.e. $8500 for a family of four).

The evaluation design that was adopted called for eligible youth who expressed an interest in career planning assistance

to be randomly assigned to either the traditional vocational or the values clarification program (see attached figure). Women who expressed an interest in the non-traditional program were accomodated outside of the random assignment process. Eligible youth who applied for CETA services but were not interested in career planning assistance were appropriately assigned to training, job placement or OJT (Title I services). This group served as a quasi-control group for the youth who received the career exploration services. Since random assignment was employed direct comparisons were made between values clarification participants and traditional vocational enrollees, and comparisons of a less experimental nature were made between those youth seeking career development assistance (traditional vocational and values clarification) and those that do not seek such help.

In order to make these comparisons demographic information was collected and pretests were administered to the youth at the intake center assessing such variables as reading and mathematics achievement levels, locus of control orientation, and amount and accuracy of career information. The locus of control orientation was measured by Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Scale and was used as a measure of generalized expectancies developed by people over the course of their lives. In order to assess the youth's knowledge of various careers

we considered a number of standardized instruments available but none seemed especially appropriate for this population. Therefore we developed the Career Information Questionnaire which assessed the perceived amount and actual accuracy of information the youth had regarding their first occupational choice if indeed they did have one. Questions dealt with job responsibilities, starting salaries, the future job market, training required etc.

Youth who opted for career development assistance (Title III) were posttested on the Locus of Control Scale and the Career Information Questionnaire at the point of job placement, OJT, or if possible, when the youth left the system at some earlier point. We kept track of the participants of the career development programs by having the program directors inform us of the dispositions of the youth upon completion of their programs. These so-called "Tracking Sheets" included whether or not the youth completed the program and if not, why not. Where the youth went after the program was also recorded (i.e. skills training, placement, etc.).

It was hypothesized that career development programs would alleviate some of the youths' feelings of nondirectiveness and powerlessness regarding their life situations. Therefore we expected a shift to a more internal locus of

control following participation in the career development programs. The posttest data from the Career Information Questionnaire was expected to reflect an increase in knowledge regarding job responsibilities, starting pay, future job market, training required, etc. This measure was intended to provide some indication of whether or not the programs actually provided the service that they contended to provide.

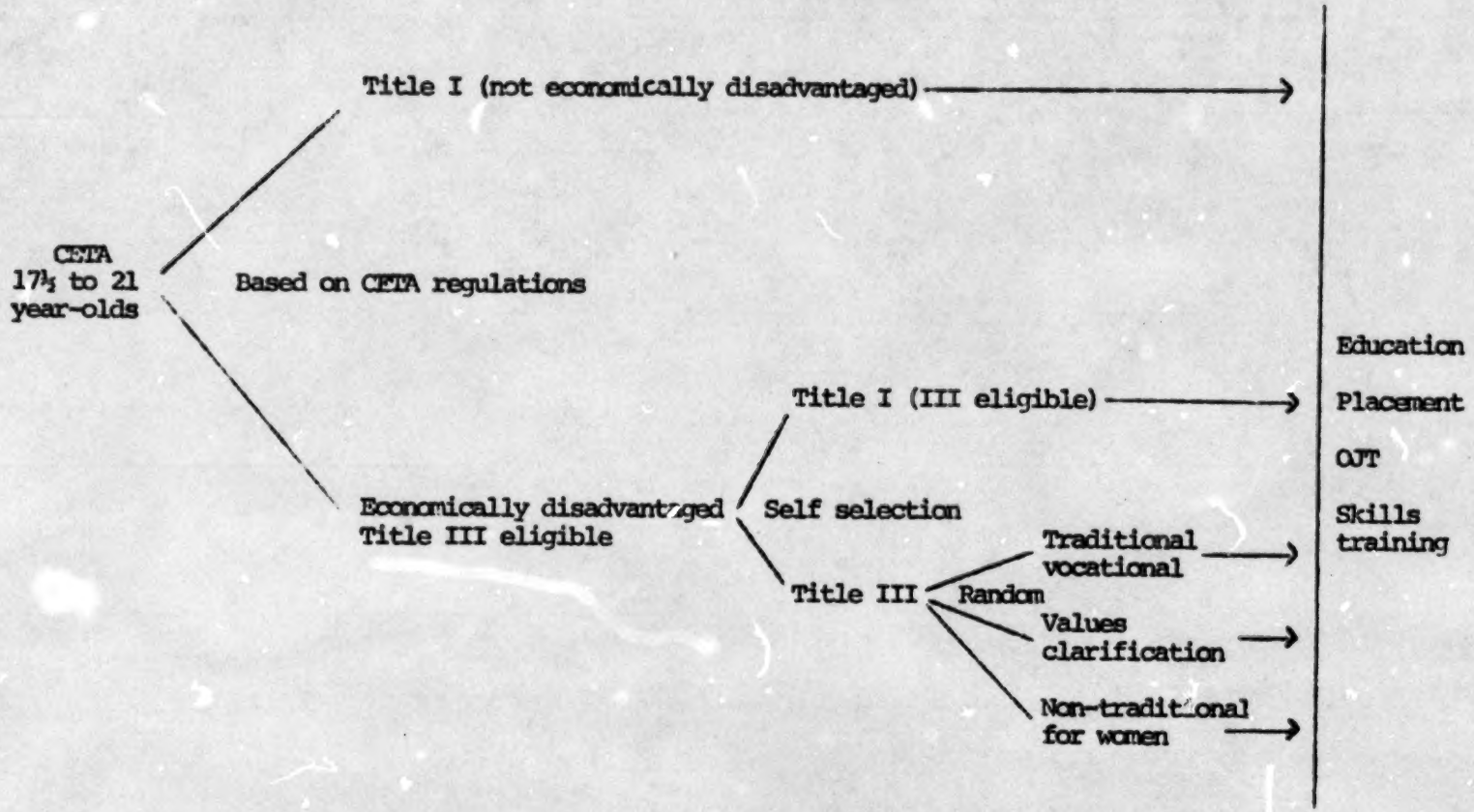
Program participants were also given the opportunity to provide feedback on general satisfaction with services they had received. Followups to assess acquisition and retention of employment were planned for both Title I youth and for those youth who received career development assistance (Title III youth). These followups were scheduled after 30, 90 and 180 days had elapsed since placement. A longer term (one year) followup is also intended to determine the youth's employment status, as well as the quality of the employment obtained.

Reference

Rotter, J. B. Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. Psychological Monographs, 1966, 80, 1 (Whole No. 609).

Schmutte, G. T. M.P.A. 1979

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS



Pretest data:
Demographic
Reading and Mathematics achievement scores
Locus of Control Scale (and factor scores)
Career Information Questionnaire

Followup data:
Locus of Control Scale
Career Information Questionnaire
Program completion
Program satisfaction
Employment or training status